



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 5564

February Session, 2014



AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL SAFETY.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the fiscal year ending June
2 30, 2015, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection
3 shall establish a safe travel to school grant program to provide grants
4 to towns for expenses incurred as part of improving student safety
5 along routes of travel to schools and in the immediate areas around
6 schools during the hours before and after regular school hours.

7 (b) On or before July 15, 2014, a town may submit an application, at
8 such time and in such manner as the department prescribes, to the
9 department for a grant pursuant to this section. Each application shall
10 include a plan for the improvement of student safety along routes of
11 travel to school and in the immediate areas around schools during the
12 hours before and after regular school hours. Such plan shall (1) be
13 developed by the town in consultation with the local law enforcement
14 agency and local or regional board of education for such town, (2)
15 include the travel routes to schools and areas around such schools that
16 will be covered by such plan, (3) establish the hours before and after
17 school during which supervision may be provided along such travel
18 routes and areas around such schools, and (4) require that any person
19 assisting in the implementation of such plan submit to state and
20 national criminal history records checks prior to implementation of

21 such plan.

22 (c) Not later than August 1, 2014, the department shall select up to
23 ten towns to receive grants under this section and shall give priority to
24 towns in which priority school districts are located or towns in which a
25 priority school is located.

26 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Emergency Services
27 and Public Protection shall study the feasibility of establishing a
28 student safety hotline. Such study shall include, but not be limited to,
29 an analysis of (1) the feasibility of establishing a student safety hotline
30 that receives anonymous phone calls and text messages relating school
31 safety concerns of students in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive,
32 and provides assistance to and referrals for such students, (2) the
33 relevant referral areas and appropriate entities and agencies to receive
34 such referrals, (3) training for operators of such student safety hotline,
35 (4) existing student safety hotlines in other states, (5) legal issues that
36 might be associated with the administration of such student safety
37 hotline, and (6) any other relevant topics or issues associated with such
38 student safety hotline. Not later than January 1, 2015, the department
39 shall submit such study to the joint standing committee of the General
40 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in
41 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

42 Sec. 3. Subsection (c) of section 10-222d of the general statutes is
43 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
44 *passage*):

45 (c) Not later than [January 1, 2012] July 1, 2014, each local and
46 regional board of education shall [approve] submit the safe school
47 climate plan developed pursuant to this section [and submit such plan]
48 to the Department of Education for approval in accordance with
49 section 4 of this act. Not later than thirty calendar days after approval
50 of [such] the safe school climate plan by the [local or regional board of
51 education] department, the board shall make such plan available on
52 the board's and each individual school in the school district's Internet

53 web site and ensure that such plan is included in the school district's
54 publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for
55 schools and in all student handbooks.

56 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of
57 Education shall receive and review each safe school climate plan
58 submitted pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-222d of the general
59 statutes, as amended by this act. The department may approve or
60 reject a safe school climate plan if such plan does not adequately
61 ensure a safe school climate at the schools under the jurisdiction of the
62 board of education submitting such plan. If the department rejects a
63 safe school climate plan submitted by a local or regional board of
64 education, such board of education shall redevelop and resubmit the
65 safe school climate plan to the department for approval not later than
66 thirty calendar days after such rejection. If the department rejects such
67 resubmitted plan, such board of education shall adopt the model safe
68 school climate plan, developed by the department pursuant to
69 subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of section 10-222h of the general
70 statutes, as amended by this act.

71 (b) The Department of Education shall make available on the
72 department's Internet web site (1) each safe school climate plan that
73 has been approved by the department, (2) a list of the school districts
74 that have an approved safe school climate plan, and (3) a list of the
75 school districts whose safe school climate plan has been rejected and is
76 in the process of resubmitting its safe school climate plan for approval
77 by the department.

78 Sec. 5. Section 10-222h of the 2014 supplement to the general statutes
79 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
80 *from passage*):

81 (a) The Department of Education shall, within available
82 appropriations, (1) document school districts' articulated needs for
83 technical assistance and training related to safe learning and bullying,
84 (2) collect information on the prevention and intervention strategies

85 used by schools to reduce the incidence of bullying, improve school
 86 climate and improve reporting outcomes, (3) develop or recommend a
 87 model safe school climate plan for grades kindergarten to twelve,
 88 inclusive, and (4) in collaboration with the Connecticut Association of
 89 Schools, disseminate to all public schools grade-level appropriate
 90 school climate assessment instruments approved by the department,
 91 including uniform surveys that collect information about students'
 92 perspectives and opinions about the school climate at the school and
 93 allow students to complete and submit such surveys anonymously, to
 94 be used by local and regional boards of education for the purposes of
 95 collecting information described in subdivision (2) of this subsection so
 96 that the department can monitor bullying prevention efforts over time
 97 and compare each district's progress to state trends.

98 (b) On or before February 1, 2014, and annually thereafter, the
 99 department shall, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a,
 100 submit a report on the status of its efforts pursuant to this section
 101 including, but not limited to, the number of verified acts of bullying in
 102 the state, an analysis of the responsive action taken by school districts,
 103 an analysis of student perspectives and opinions about school climate
 104 at schools and any recommendations it may have regarding additional
 105 activities or funding to prevent bullying in schools and improve school
 106 climate to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly
 107 having cognizance of matters relating to education and children and to
 108 the speaker of the House of Representatives, the president pro tempore
 109 of the Senate and the majority and minority leaders of the House of
 110 Representatives and the Senate.

111 (c) The department may accept private donations for the purposes
 112 of this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section

Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	10-222d(c)
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>from passage</i>	10-222h

FIN *Joint Favorable Subst.*